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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002668

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/06/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL MARR EAID ECON IZ

SUBJECT: NINEWA: DPM SALAH HOSTS BREAKTHROUGH MEETING
BETWEEN MINISTRIES AND NINEWA PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS ON
AUGUST 1

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Team Leader Jason Hyland: 1.4 (B) and (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih hosted August 1 a breakthrough meeting between senior Iraqi Government ministers and deputy ministers, and Nineva Governor Kashmoula, his top two technical deputies, and seven Provincial Directors General (PDG) representing key central ministries. PRT Nineva (Mosul), together with MND-N, played a central role in brokering this meeting, which led to an airing of problems large and small, and concrete progress in solving some longstanding issues. Iraqi government initiative played a key role in making this forum effective. END SUMMARY

Senior-level attendance...

¶12. (U) The Deputy Prime Minister arranged the attendance of senior officials of the Iraqi Government including the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Trade, the Minister of State for National Security (and Acting Minister of Transportation), the Deputy Minister for Municipalities, the Deputy Minister of Oil, Deputy Minister of Housing and Construction, Deputy Minister of Industry, Deputy Minister of Planning, and the Director of the Trade Bank. MND-North DCG (S) BG Wiercinski and PRT-Nineva TL Hyland also participated.

...getting down to business...

¶13. (C) DPM Salih ran the meeting in a very business-like manner, with senior officials rotating in and out as the topics changed. Notable was that the Ministers were as engaged as the provincial officials on the issues and were eager for feedback on the condition of their ministerial issues in Nineva. The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and other Baghdad officials pressed hard on budget execution, stressing that DGs and provincial officials should not let fears of corruption allegations paralyze them from getting desperately needed services to their citizens. The meeting, which lasted about three hours, led to a number of meetings on the margins and that evening at the al-Rasheed Hotel. In some cases, the PDGs, who are employees of the ministries they represent, were meeting their ministers for the first time. In a lengthy meeting between the Deputy Minister of Education, the Governor, and the Nineva PDG for Education, the three solved an intractable issue about the Governor's hiring authority for teachers.

¶14. (SBU) The August 1 meeting was the direct outcome of the Governor's monthly lobbying visit to Baghdad on July 25, also organized by the PRT and MND-N. During that visit, the Governor paid calls on DPM Salih, Minister of Interior and Minister of Finance, as well as on GEN Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, and OPA Ambassador Clarke. When the Governor asked the DPM for more support from the ministries, Salih proposed

the August 1 follow-up meeting on the spot, and the Governor readily agreed.

...Finding ground-truth on key issues

¶5. (C) Among the key achievements of this meeting were:

- A commitment on the spot to increase the crude oil allotment for Ninewa province to 1.5 million liters and to extend the operating hours of the Bayji refinery from 12 hrs a day to 24 hours a day, along with a detailed review of where the problems lie in getting oil from the refinery to Mosul (Note: Many of the bottlenecks are on the provincial side).
- DPM's and Acting Minister of Transportation's strong commitment to ensuring that Ha'jj flights take place from Mosul this year (see septel). The Minister of Finance also approved funding on the spot for all the necessary civil aviation operating equipment to run airport and pre-screening facilities. In a sidebar, Acting Minister of Transportation told PRT Team Leader that he was ready to fly to Mosul, if air assets could be arranged, to advance the process.
- The Governor and PDG for Education won approval from the Deputy Prime Minister to hire 5000 additional positions in Ninewa.
- The Minister of Trade, the Governor and the PDG held a lengthy and detailed discussion about missing items in the food distribution program, and how best to address the shortfalls. PRT will track whether alternative distribution routes proposed by Minister of Trade work out.

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- While all parties agreed that the Ministry of Oil was nearly impossible to work with (the senior Ministry of Oil representative there did not seem to disagree) the group was able to review the current problems, and look at some potential fixes, including using the Kisik route more aggressively. The Minister of Finance also expressed support for a refinery in Ninewa.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) As we were leaving the DPM's residence, we overheard the Governor touting to his PDGs and senior staff the great value of this exchange; for a politician not known for his effusiveness, this was a good sign. The press coverage in Iraqi and regional media was also extensive and positive.

¶7. (C) Under the common PRT-Ninewa/MND-N view, such Iraqi provincial-central meetings should become commonplace, with minimal to no USG involvement. Several signs suggested that this may be happening: first, the meeting came out of Iraqi initiative, second, the Governor, at TL Hyland's suggestion, reached out directly to DPM Salih's staff to confirm arrangements for the meeting, and third, the PDGs, after a PRT/OPA suggestion, prepared detailed agendas, including action items for the ministers. Finally, when bad weather grounded the CF air assets, the DPM stepped in and offered his own assets to return the Iraqi part of the Mosul delegation to the north - which is a precedent definitely worth repeating. PRT is looking forward to working closely with MND-N on a successful northern governors' meeting at the end of August. END COMMENT

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